## **Marine Life Protection Act Initiative**



# Policy Guidance from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force

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## **Past Policy Guidance**

- Summary of key guidance provided by the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) in previous study regions for developing marine protected area proposals
- BRTF is considering how the previous guidance applies to the MLPA North Coast Study Region
- Guidance discussed at both the November and January BRTF meetings
- Preliminary BRTF input is that previous guidance applies to the north coast; expected to formalize in March



#### **Guidance: Science Guidelines**

- Place Strong Emphasis on MPAs that Meet the Science Guidelines for "Preferred" Size and Spacing
  - Meet "preferred" MPA size and MPA spacing
  - Per the MLPA, marine reserves serve as the "backbone" of any proposed network
  - Proposals should include MPAs with "very high" or "high" levels of protection for the backbone



# **Guidance: SAT Evaluations**

- Place Great Weight on the Results of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team Evaluations of Marine Protected Area Proposals
  - Especially focus on evaluations of habitat representation, habitat replication, MPA size, and MPA spacing
  - Bioeconomic models represent a useful tool that should be utilized in conjunction with, but not in place of, the other SAT analyses



#### **Guidance: Cross-Interest Support**

- Cross-interest Support for MPA Proposals is Very Important and Will be Given Great Weight; Strive for Convergence Where Possible
  - Cross-interest support includes a broad range of consumptive and non-consumptive interests
  - Important for helping to ensure community support of an MPA network, both statewide and regionally
  - MPA proposals that do not reflect cross-interest support carry less weight; may not carry forward to final round of MPA proposal development



#### **Guidance: DFG Feasibility Criteria**

- Give Strong Consideration to the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
  Feasibility Criteria and Provide Specific Rationale for Deviations
  - MPAs must be designed such that they can be feasibly managed by the appropriate organizations
  - MPA proposals that do not meet DFG feasibility criteria should include a specific rationale as to why
  - Pay particular attention to enforceability, including clear and simple boundaries and regulations
  - Fisheries regulations are outside the purview of the MLPA; avoid proposing them within MPAs (beyond identifying allowed take)



#### **Guidance: Water Quality**

- Water Quality Considerations are Secondary to the Science Guidelines of the MLPA and Master Plan
  - Water quality is important to consider and incorporate into MPA planning
  - SAT has provided excellent information regarding opportunities for siting MPAs and areas to be avoided
  - At the same time, water quality considerations are secondary to the goals of the MLPA and quidelines of the master plan



#### **Guidance: Best Readily Available Data**

- Utilize the Best Readily Available Science and Information as Directed by the MLPA
  - MLPA requires the use of best readily-available science and information, not the gathering of new data and information
  - SAT develops methods for addressing habitat data or other gaps and clarifies those methods
  - BRTF found treatment of data gaps adequate and directed stakeholders to move forward with readily available data



### **Guidance: Funding**

- Long-Term Funding for Implementation and Management is Important, but Does not Affect the MPA Planning Process
  - MLPA Initiative is focused on the planning phase of implementing the MLPA
  - BRTF provided feedback to the state regarding options for long-term funding and recommendations for which options to pursue
  - BRTF supports identifying funding for long-term implementation and management
  - BRTF also noted issues of long-term funding do not affect the MPA planning process



# **Guidance: Special Closures**

- Special Closures May be Useful in Specific Cases, but Should be Used Sparingly and Selectively
  - Main focus of the regional stakeholder group is to develop alternative MPA proposals
  - In some instances special closures may offer protection from threats that is not necessarily addressed by MPAs
  - Regional stakeholder group may make recommendations for special closures if does not detract from primary task
  - If recommended, use sparingly and selectively



## **Guidance: Military Use Areas**

- Military Use Areas May be Proposed as MPAs, Taking into Consideration that Some Military Activities May be Inconsistent with MPA Goals
  - MPAs may be proposed within military use areas
  - Work with military representatives to address military uses and interests (similar to working with other community interests)
  - Consider available information on where different kinds of military uses occur that may be inconsistent with MPA goals



#### **Potential Additional BRTF Guidance**

- Wave Energy Projects
- Tribal Uses
- Number of Alternative MPA Proposals in Rounds 2 and 3